

NORTH CAROLINA AG EXPORT SEMINAR

Speaker Bios - Tuesday, April 2, 2019

Alexander M. “Sandy” Stewart, Ph.D. *Assistant Commissioner, N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services*



Alexander M. “Sandy” Stewart serves as Assistant Commissioner for Agriculture at the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDCA&CS). In this capacity, he has responsibilities for the agricultural services programs of the Department which include the following Divisions: Agronomics, Food Distribution, Marketing, Plant Industry, Research Stations, Small Farms, and Soil and Water Conservation as well as Environmental Programs. Previously, Sandy served as Director of the Research Stations for NCDCA&CS and N.C. State University, was a faculty member as an Extension Tobacco Specialist at N.C. State and an Extension Cotton Specialist for Louisiana State University. He has also held positions in private industry in the cotton seed industry and as an independent consultant.

Sandy graduated from N.C. State University with a B.S. in Agronomy in 1995, an M.S. in Crop Science in 1998, and a Ph.D. in Crop Science in 2000. He was raised on a small farm in Moore County near Carthage, N.C. where he resides with his wife, Carol Grace, and their three children Martha Grace, Virgie, and Palmer Mac. The family farm has been in the family as a working farm since 1777. Sandy is an Elder at Union Presbyterian Church near Carthage and is active in the community, serving on the Board of Trustees of Sandhills Community College.

Jose Abad *Executive Vice President, Lomi Global Foods, LLC*



Jose Abad was born in Quito, Ecuador, and lived in various countries due to the diplomatic and training positions of his father, eventually moving to the U.S. permanently in 1999. His studies were in business administration and marketing. Jose worked for many years directing the retail sales department in multinational companies. Then he had the opportunity to collaborate in a family business where he mainly developed the global markets in dairy ingredients such as milk powders, whey powders, and milk proteins among many others, concentrating mainly in Latin American markets. Jose was the General Manager of the Mexico office and participated in the opening of other offices in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Peru, and Argentina.

Today, Jose is the Executive Vice President at Lomi Global Foods and his main responsibility is the development of dairy products. He loves sports, mainly soccer, speaks fluently both Spanish and English, and is active in the different support groups of his church.

Dr. Clay Altizer *International Marketing Specialist, N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services*



Clay Altizer currently serves as an International Marketing Specialist – Forest Products for the NCDCA&CS in Raleigh. Previous employment experience includes serving as the Utilization Forester with the N.C. Forest Service, a Research Assistant Professor in the Division of Forest Resources at West Virginia University, and a Research Associate in the College of Forest Resources at Mississippi State University. Clay received a B.A. in Biology from Virginia Military Institute, an M.S. in Forestry and Forest Products from Virginia Tech, and both an M.P.P.A in Public Policy and Administration, and a Ph.D. in Forest Resources from Mississippi State University. Clay is a native of Christiansburg, V.A., and currently resides in Clayton, N.C.

Jose “Pepe” Calderon *Sales Manager, Farm Pak Products/Barnes Farming Corporation*



Jose Calderon is the Sales Manager at Farm Pak Products/Barnes Farming Corp since 2007. He previously held the positions of Labor Coordinator and Packer in the packing house. Jose arrived in the U.S. in 2001 as an H2A farm labor worker from Costa Rica.

Jose holds degrees in accounting, business administration and computer science. He was awarded with the 2009 Exporter of the Year award from the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services and in 2017 was appointed by Governor Roy Cooper to the North Carolina Board of Agriculture.

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Stan Carroll *Prometheus Consulting*



Stan Carroll is a highly skilled and successful professional with experience coordinating global supply chain operations, inventories, materials and procurement including compliance with applicable regulations and guidelines. Stan's expertise lies in implementing strategic initiatives and projects; overseeing Lean manufacturing processes; and leading diverse staff to maximize productivity, efficiency, and overall business performance. Through his experience, Stan has become adept in ensuring alignment with organizational goals and requirements while facilitating streamlined logistical operations and building strategic relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

Stan received his Bachelor's in IT & Business Management from George Mason University, as well as certification as a Lean Practitioner and a Six Sigma Black Belt. Stan's proven ability to optimize and lead supply chain operations, along with his solid talents in communication and problem solving, contributed immensely to the success of Kraft, Borden Foods, Heinz, and Garner Foods Manufacturing.

Bill Graban *CEO, Prime Lumber Company*



Bill Graban is co-owner and one of the original founders of Prime Lumber Company. Bill graduated with a B.S. in Wood Technology from West Virginia University in 1980. After a few years of supervisory experience in furniture, Bill was hired as a hardwood lumber broker. In 1988, Bill and two college friends came up with a plan to create Prime Lumber Company.

Prime Lumber has been exporting for 30 years. For Bill and his partner Jeff Neidert, exports have always been an important part of Prime Lumber's business plan. The percent of exports has varied depending on the world economic situation, accounting for 35% to 70% of sales.

The methods of communication were far different 30 years ago. However, maintaining and cultivating business relationships continues to be paramount to both domestic and export business growth at Prime Lumber Company.

Albert E. Guarnieri *Partner, Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein, LLP*



Mr. Guarnieri is a Partner in Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein, LLP, based in the law firm's Charlotte office. Parker Poe has approximately 200 lawyers in N.C., S.C., and G.A. Mr. Guarnieri joined Parker Poe's International Practice Group in 1986 and is a leader of the International Practice Group for the firm.

Mr. Guarnieri has over 30 years' experience in international business transactions and has represented a wide variety of U.S. and foreign corporations. Mr. Guarnieri and Parker Poe serve as counsel for a significant number of U.S. and foreign companies, assisting with foreign direct investment (FDI), corporate structuring, import/export matters, facility location projects, mergers and acquisitions, and corporate and commercial matters.

Mr. Guarnieri is Charlotte Chapter Director of The American Council on Germany and serves on the leadership team for N.C. Chapter of the German American Chamber of Commerce. He is a past Chair of the International Law Section of the N.C. Bar Association. Mr. Guarnieri often speaks on topics involving international business investments and transactions.

Jamie Hall *Marketing Specialist, N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services*

Jamie Hall is the "Got To Be NC" Marketing Manager for NCDACS. Jamie received his B.S. in Marketing and Business Management from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

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John Hammond *International Marketing Specialist, N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services*



John develops export trade opportunities for North Carolina agricultural businesses as an International Marketing Specialist at NCDA&CS. His primary responsibilities include the promotion of craft beer, spirits, and wine both domestically and internationally. Previously, John worked with International Marketing to develop trade for forestry products, cotton, Christmas trees, and nursery products. John also worked with the Horticulture and Seafood Marketing Section within NCDA&CS to promote N.C. horticultural crops in domestic markets. Prior to joining NCDA&CS, John was the owner of a landscape design-build contracting and urban forestry consulting firm. John is an ISA Certified Arborist and N.C. Certified Plant Professional. He has over 22 years' experience in agricultural and horticultural industries. John received his B.S. in Horticultural Science from N.C. State University. He was NCDA&CS Employee of the Month in April 2017 and completed a two-year Agriculture Leadership Development Program through the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission and N.C. State University in March of 2019.

Reinhard von Hennigs, LL.M. *Managing Partner, BridgehouseLaw LLP*



Reinhard von Hennigs is a licensed attorney in both Germany and N.C. and admitted as a Foreign Law Consultant in G.A. Mr. von Hennigs graduated from the University of Heidelberg. He obtained a master's degree at the McGeorge School of Law and earned his law degree at the University of Bonn. Reinhard von Hennigs is fluent in German, English, and French. Mr. von Hennigs consults clients on U.S., German, and European law. His practice areas include international business transactions, incorporations in the U.S. and Germany, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Advisory, start-up consultations, immigration, business visas, company-sponsored "green cards," as well as dual citizenship applications. Mr. von Hennigs is equipped with far-reaching experience in international investment and real estate investment trusts. Furthermore, he regularly assists U.S. and German clients in international litigation, litigation defense, and products liability actions.

Daniel W. Holt *International Finance Specialist, U.S. Small Business Administration*



Dan Holt was born and spent his early years in Wilmington, N.C. Dan received his B.A. degree from The Citadel in Charleston, S.C. After serving as an officer in the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers in Europe, Dan returned to civilian life and managed a major retail operation. After a second stint in the military, Dan became employed in financial services and banking. Dan joined the Small Business Administration (SBA) in the early 1980's as part of the Disaster Farm Loan servicing operation. Dan was promoted to the Commercial Loan Division and became the Senior Lender for the N.C. District Office. In the late 90's, SBA realized the need for small business to have access to capital to be able to compete in the global markets. Dan was selected for the position of International Finance Specialist for N.C., S.C., and eastern T.N., and has worked for the past several years as a partner with the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service and the Export-Import Bank to expand the potential of small business in the Carolinas.

Paola Karlson *CEO, Lomi Global Foods, LLC*



Paola Karlson was born in Quito, Ecuador, and moved to the U.S. in 1994. She studied International Studies, concentrating on Global Marketing and worked full-time at a trading company which provided opportunities to be able to grow in her career and experiences. During this time, Paola was promoted to International Trading within the company and now has 12 years of trading experience. She has had the pleasure of trading various commodities such as vegetable oils, rice, frozen meats, and pulses into different countries around the world. Now, Paola is proud to be an entrepreneur of her own trading company. She is married and has two boys aged four and two and has a dog named Toby. Lomi Global Foods, LLC is a family-owned company, established in N.C., dedicated to providing best practices and trade solutions to their partners in the U.S. and around the world. Lomi Global Food's main goal is to create a global supermarket by providing services and expertise that will allow producers, suppliers, and buyers to get proper value and optimal quality of their products.

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Cathy Xuefang Ma *International Marketing Specialist, N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services*



Cathy Xuefang Ma is an International Marketing Specialist at NCDA&CS, focusing her efforts on the processed food sector. Cathy worked on the "Goodness Grows in NC" marketing team, for three years, promoting N.C. agricultural products in domestic markets. She also worked on the "Got To Be NC" promotion campaign and a host of other marketing programs. Before that, she was a Marketing Specialist for Beswick Engineering Inc. Co., headquartered in N.H. She worked on Beswick's press releases, ad placements, and catalogs. Earlier, Cathy was the Sales/Market Promotion manager at the China Division of R.R. Donnelly & Sons, a global commercial printing company. Cathy's education includes an M.B.A. from Sam M. Walton College of Business of University of Arkansas. She received her Bachelor's in Graphic Engineering from the Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication. Cathy was born in China. She speaks English, Mandarin, and Cantonese. She now lives in Raleigh, N.C. She is married and has one daughter.

Crystal Mills *Senior International Trade Specialist, U.S. Commercial Service*



Crystal Mills received her B.S. in Animal & Poultry Sciences at Virginia Tech and a Master's in Business Administration with a concentration in Human Resources from Strayer University. She gained agriculture experience in the two positions she held while with the USDA; one as an Import Export Specialist, until 2015, when she began her career with the U.S. Commercial Service (CS) in New Orleans. With CS, Crystal has led a trade mission to India and has participated in numerous market exploration and business matchmaking events to link U.S. companies to opportunities in international markets. Currently a member of the CS Charlotte team, she remains focused on energy and environmental technologies and continues to seek out global opportunities for small and medium sized enterprises.

David S. Robinson *Counsel, Nexsen Pruet*



David S. Robinson is Special Counsel with Nexsen Pruet's International, and Employment and Labor Law Groups. His practice is focused in the areas of international, corporate, employment, immigration, and commercial law. David helps global businesses integrate corporate compliance and operational programs into subsidiary operations, facilitate the transfer of personnel among operations, comply with export control and boycott regulations, and negotiate commercial and joint venture relationships.

David regularly presents on cross-border legal issues. He has written and taught an M.B.A.-level International Business Ethics course. David is currently teaching "Business Organizations" at Campbell University Law School. He was the international CLE planner for the N.C. Bar Association's Annual Meetings of the Business and International Law Sections of the Bar in 2014, and recently chaired the International Law Section for a second time. He is also a recipient of the highest award accorded to an international lawyer by the N.C. Bar Association.

Dr. Mike Seibert *Director, SBTDC Regional Center at N.C. State University*



Dr. Mike Seibert is the Director of the Small Business & Technology Development Center (SBTDC) Regional Center at N.C. State University and the Director of the SBTDC's International Business Development Program. Mike is the center's lead strategic management practitioner with extensive experience with advising family-owned and privately held firms on ways to improve their competitiveness and profitability. Seibert received his B.S. in Accounting from Widener University, M.B.A. from Campbell University and Ed.D. in Organization Development from N.C. State University. He is a Certified Global Business Professional and Economic Development Finance Professional. Seibert also serves as adjunct faculty for SKEMA Business School and Campbell University.

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Peter Thornton *Assistant Director, N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services*



Peter Thornton is the Assistant Director for International Marketing for NCDA&CS. Previously, Peter was the Vice President of International Marketing for the American Peanut Council in Alexandria, V.A. Before that, he worked in various positions in the Asia Division of the American Soybean Association in St. Louis, M.O. Peter received his Bachelor's in Economics from American University and his Master's in International Relations from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS).

Peter is a member of the USTR and USDA Agriculture Trade Advisory Committee, the USDOC Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee (TPCC) State and Federal Export Promotion Working Group, and a member of the North Carolina District Export Council. He was the March 2010 NCDA&CS Employee of the Month and in 2012 received the SBTDC Extension, Engagement and Economic Award of Excellence. He is a Certified Public Manager and a Kentucky Colonel.

Michelle Wang *International Marketing Specialist, N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services*



Michelle Wang is an International Marketing Specialist at NCDA&CS. Michelle has nearly a decade of experience in international business. Before joining the department, she worked for PS International, Ltd., an international agricultural product trading company, based in Chapel Hill, N.C. While at PS International, Michelle developed frozen protein sales in the Asia region and managed the China protein sales office as an International Trader. She also has experience arranging logistics and documentation for international shipments and ensuring cargo meets the export requirements of various commodities.

Michelle received her Bachelor's in Textile Engineering from Soochow University in Suzhou, China, and her Master's in Textile Marketing from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Michelle is originally from Beijing, China, and speaks fluent Mandarin and English. Michelle is married with one son and one daughter.

Patrick Weaver *Manager of International Banking, First National Bank Corporation*



Pat Weaver is the Manager of International Banking for FNB Corp. He received his B.S. in Commerce from the McIntire School of Commerce at the University of Virginia. He also studied International Finance at the London School of Economics. Mr. Weaver began his 30+ year international banking career at First National Bank of Atlanta in 1984. In 1987, he moved to Charlotte after accepting a Vice President position at First Union Bank in their Capital Markets Division. After 12 years, Mr. Weaver joined Bank of America as a Director in the Global Rates and Currencies division. In 2011, he began a four-year tenure at Fifth Third Bank before moving to Houston, in 2015, as the Director of Foreign Exchange with BBVA. Mr. Weaver returned to Charlotte in 2017, after accepting his current position with FNB. He enjoys using his experience to help his clients grow and manage their international businesses.

Anton Yang *Owner, AD Hardwoods Co.*



Anton Yang, a citizen of China, has worked in the import/export lumber business for over 20 years, supplying hardwoods to the Asian market. Mr. Yang's work has taken him to Europe, Africa, and South America. Eventually, he became interested in the abundant U.S. lumber market and was attracted by the business and entrepreneurial opportunities. In 2016, after extensive research and planning, he and his family moved to the U.S. to open a lumber export business, AD Hardwoods, located in Salem, V.A. To date, AD Hardwoods has exported more than \$4 million worth of N.C. and V.A. hardwoods to China.

Anton and his wife, Claire, attribute much of their success to the valuable guidance and resources provided by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in N.C. and V.A., regional and national trade hardwood associations, and local governments.